Quantifying Pain in Actual Practice

By Gene Lewis, DC

Chiropractor: “Hi, how are you doing today?”

Patient: “Oh, I feel better.”

Chiropractor: “Great. How much better? Are you sleeping better? Can you sit at your computer longer without pain?”

Patient: “I guess so. Did I show you our kids’ new pictures?”

Chiropractor: "On a scale of 1 to 10, how much pain are you having?"

Patient: "Oh, I don't know how to answer that. Did I tell you we’re going to the beach next weekend?"

Chiropractor: "Would you say that your pain was middle of the road - maybe 4 or 5 out of 10?"

Patient: "It's so hard when you talk numbers to me. It's just more achy in some places and less painful in others, but it feels better than last week."

Chiropractor: "How much better than last week?"

Patient: "Better than last week. Did you watch Jimmy Fallon last night? He's so funny."

Chiropractor (grinding his teeth): "Would you say that you’re 10% better? 25% better?"

Patient: "I’m lots better than when I first came in."

Chiropractor (reaching for his blood pressure medication): "OK, on a scale of 1 to 10, with 10 being the most pain you've ever had and zero being no pain at all, how do you think you’re doing the last day or two?"

Patient: "I don't know how to answer that. A lot better - maybe an 8 or 9."

Chiropractor: "You're a lot better and your pain level is 8 or 9? That's with the worst possible pain being a 10?"
Patient: "Sure. Remember when I first came, in you asked me that question and I said my pain was 12 or 13 out of 10. So 8 or 9 is a lot better, don’t you think?"

Chiropractor starts crying